

THE  
SHRINES OF SITAKUND.

IN THE DISTRICT OF  
CHITTAGONG IN BENGAL.

BY

ADHARLAL SEN, B. A.

DEPUTY COLLECTOR OF CALCUTTA, FORMERLY OF CHITTAGONG.  
LATE SCHOLAR, PRESIDENCY COLLEGE; MEMBER OF THE  
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL; AUTHOR OF "LALITA  
SUNDARI," "MENAKA," "NALINI," "KUSUM KANAN,"  
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TO

Charles B. Tabone, Esq., M. A.

PRINCIPAL OF THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE;

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL; AND  
REGISTRAR OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

WHO HAS BEEN MORE THAN A FATHER TO ME.

*THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED*

*As a Token of my gratefulness, and of my  
reverence for his genius and learning.*

# PREFACE.



I visited Sitakund in 1880, during the *Siva-Chaturdasi* festival. From the notes then recorded by me, I wrote a paper on the Shrines of the place, which was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the 2nd March, 1881. This paper, with some additions and alterations, is now presented before the public.

It was owing to the kindness of the late Pandit Bhairava Chandra Nyayaratna of Chit-tagong, that I was able to obtain copies of some of the sacred writings to which reference is made in the following pages. To my old and revered tutor, Pandit Haris Chandra Kaviratna, of the Presidency College, my thanks are also due for his kindly going through the proof-sheets, and helping me with his suggestions.

A. S.

*Calcutta, June 15th, 1884.*

THE

## SHRINES OF SITAKUND.

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Sítakund is an outpost in the Police circle of Kumiria attached to the Sudder Subdivision of the district of Chittagong in Bengal. It is bounded on the east by the Sitakund range, on the west by the Bay of Bengal, on the north and south by the Kumiria and Merkaseraí thanas respectively, the population by the last Census being 36,581 souls.

The city of the same name (lat.  $22^{\circ} 37' 55''$ ; long.  $91^{\circ} 43' 40''$ ), which is at a distance of 24 miles to the north of the Sudder Station, is not mentioned by name in the Ayeen Akbery; but it appears to have been a place of considerable importance at the time when Chittagong first came into the possession of the English. Mr. Harry Verelst, the first Chief of Chittagong, who afterwards succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the Governorship of Bengal, reported his arrival from this place on the 3rd January, 1761.\* Lord

\* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, page 5.



Teignmouth visited it in 1778,\* and Sir William Jones in 1786.† It was also inspected and described by Captain Pogson in 1831,‡ and Sir Joseph Hooker in 1854.§ Sitakund still continues to hold its position as a place of note in the district. It has a *moonsif* of its own, which, though still going by its name, has, however, been recently removed to an adjacent place. The trade of Sitakund is not inconsiderable, lying as it does on the Grand Trunk Road between Dacca and Chittagong, which is always fit for wheeled traffic, and being accessible within a short distance by boats throughout the year. There is not certainly a more beautiful place on earth. Nature has adorned it with all that is sublime and beautiful in creation. It is a meet residence for gods. The grand mountains, the beautiful waterfalls, the volcanic springs, the clear streams, the thick forests, and their conflagrations at night, the numberless odorous flowers, the fragrant breeze and the sweet song of birds,—these no one can forget, who has once been there.

\* Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol. II, p. 55.

† Ibid. Letter from Sir William Jones to Mr. Justice Hyde.

‡ Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204. The date of Pogson's visit to Sitakund, as given by the late Dr. Oldham, quoting Corbyn, in his paper on the Thermal Springs of India edited by his son, is 1778. (*Vide* p. 59, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.) But this is not correct, as will be seen from Captain Pogson's own Narrative. It was Lord Teignmouth who visited the place in 1778.

§ Hooker's Himalayan Journals, Vol. II, p. 352.

It is, however, from a religious point of view, that the place is held in the greatest esteem. In Eastern Bengal, which is condemned by the orthodox as the Mleccha country, not visited by the Pándavas (पाण्डववर्जितदेश), there is no place so renowned as Sitakund. It is one of the 51 sacred *Píthas* (पीठ),\* on which fell scattered the limbs of Satí, the consort of Siva, whose dead body was cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu. "On Chandrasekhara in Chittagong in Eastern Bengal," says the *Adipurána*,† "there is a place of great sanctity, which

■ चङ्कले दक्षवाङ्मर्मे भैरवचन्द्रशेखरः ।

व्यक्तरूपा भगवती भवानी तत्र देवता ॥

इति तन्त्रचूडामणौ शिवपार्वतीसंवादे

एकपञ्चाशद्विद्योत्पत्तौ पीठनिर्णयः ।

*Vide* Sir Raja Radhakanta Deva's *Sabdakalpadruma*, Vol. III, p. 2150, and Vol. VII, p. 702 (supplement) 1st Edition.

চট্টগ্রামে ডানিহল অর্ধ অনুভব ।

ভবানী দেবতা চন্দ্রশেখর চৈতন্য ॥

ভারতচন্দ্র রায়ের অন্নদামঙ্গল ।

চক্রবর্তীর ১ম নিশা পাল ।

Date of composition of *Annadāmangala*, S. 1674=1753 A. D.

হেম জয়ে শ্রুতি রসে ব্রহ্ম নিরুপিত ।

সেই শব্দে এই গীত ভারত রচিত ॥

† देवाभिलषितं क्षेत्रं वङ्गप्राक् चास्ति मैत्रजे ।

अतिगुह्यं महत्पुण्यं चङ्कले चन्द्रशेखरे ॥

*Adipurána, Vide. p. 105 Chandrasekhara Māhātmya*

by Uma Charan Mookerjee.



is the favourite and secret resort of the gods." "We have heard before," the Rishis said in the *Devipurāna*,\* "of Sitakund situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds". "Ayodhya, Muttra, Maya (Hurdwar), Benares, Kānchi (Conjeveram), Avanti (Ojjein), and Dwārakā—these seven places are the dispensers of salvation. In Benares, Maināka, Ekāmra-vana (Bhubanesvara), Kailās and Sumeru, Siva constantly dwells. During the Kali Yuga," says Vishnu to his consort, in the *Vārāhī Tantra*,† "Chittagong is the habitation of the gods." So again Siva said in the *Linga Purana*,‡ "I shall dwell with thee, O

\* सीताकुण्डं श्रुतं पूर्वं त्रैलोक्यजगत्पावनं ।

चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्थं भारताख्यसमन्वितम् ॥

इति श्रीदेवीपुराणे चैवमाहात्म्ये वशिष्ठाख्ये शिवरहस्य-  
कथने श्रीश्रीचन्द्रशेखरप्राप्तिरहस्योऽध्यायः ।

† वयोध्या मयुरा माया काशी काञ्ची चवन्तिका ।

पुरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मुक्तिदायिकाः ॥

वाराणसी च मैनाक एकाचवन्तैव च ।

कैलासरजताद्रिश्च स्वर्णाद्रिश्च पद्मकः ॥

एतेषु शङ्करो नित्यं वसेद्देवीसमन्वितः ।

कलौ खानक्ष सर्वेषां देवानां चङ्गले शुभे ॥

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणीसंवादे  
तृतीयः पटलः ।

‡ लोकानाञ्च हितार्थाय वक्ष्ये चन्द्रशेखरे ।

त्वया सह वसिष्ठाभि सत्यं सत्यं वरामने ॥

*Linga Purana, Vide. p. 105, Chandrasekhara Mahāt-  
mya by Uma Charan Mookerjee.*

fair-faced one, on Chandrasekhara in Bengal for the good of men." The sanctity of the shrines of Sitakund is a favourite theme with the writers of the Puranas and Tantras, and passages bearing on the subject need not be multiplied. The shrines attract pilgrims from all parts of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, as also from the North-Western Provinces. The Siva-Chaturdasí festival, according to Dr. Hunter,\* is attended by ten to twenty thousand pilgrims. The minor gatherings, at the eclipses of the sun and moon, and at like occasions, number from two to four thousand devotees.

The leading works which treat of these shrines are (1) *Devípurána*, (2) *Váráhi Tantra*, (3) *Chinnamastá Tantra*. Passing mention of them may also be found in the following works: *Ádipurana*, *Linga Purana*, *A'di Brahma Purana*, *Churámani Tantra*, *Yogini Tantra*, *Váyu Purana*, *Bhavishya Purana*, *Tantrasára*, and *Kálimáhátmya*. A passage "अमरनाथसुन्दरायसुन्दरीश्वरपञ्चते" is generally referred to the *Amarakosha*. In Colebrooke's excellent edition of the Dictionary, I searched for the passage in vain, but have succeeded in tracing it to the *Mahálingesvara Tantra* in the prayer of a hundred names addressed to Siva. The exact age, in which the aforesaid Tantras and Puranas were written, cannot be ascertained. According to Dr. Monier Williams, "if the oldest known Purana is not older than the sixth or

\* Vide Hunter's Statistical Account of Chittagong, p. 232.

seventh century, an earlier date can scarcely be attributed to the oldest known Tantra.\* There is no mention of Chittagong, or of the shrines of Sitakund, either in the *Rámáyana*, or in the *Mahábhárata*. According to Dr. Hunter,† there is mention in the latter epic of Trilochana, a powerful king of Tipperah, who is supposed to have been contemporary with Yudhishtira; but I have failed to trace it, though I came across two passages which speak of the conquest of that kingdom by Sahadeva and Karna.‡ We also know that the early kings of Tipperah were staunch Sivaïtes, and that a portion of the expenses of the Sitakund shrines is still defrayed by the Tipperah Raj.§ Dr. Hunter|| has also informed us, that “in 1512 the Tipperah General conquered Chittagong.” But when these shrines, now so cele-

■ Dr. Monier Williams's *Indian Wisdom*, page 504.

† Hunter's *Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah*, page 464.

‡ चैपुरं स्वप्ने राजानमभिमितोजसम् ।

निजयाह महावाड्डरसा पौरवेश्वरम् ॥ ५८॥

इति सभापर्वणि दिग्बिजयपर्वणि सहदेवदिग्बिजये

एकविंशतमोऽध्यायः ।

मोहमं पतमस्यैव विपुरां कोशलां तथा ।

एतान् सर्वान् विनिर्जित्य करमादाय सर्वशः ॥ ९ ॥

इक्ष्वां दिग्माख्याय कर्षो जित्वा महारथाम् ।

इक्ष्वां दक्षिणात्येषु योधयामास हतजः ॥ १० ॥

इत्यारण्यके पर्वणि घोषयात्रापर्वणि कर्षदिग्बिजये

विपद्याहदधिकद्विंशतमोऽध्यायः ।

■ Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha's *Chronicles of Tipperah*, p. 5.

|| Hunter's *Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah*, p. 465.

brated, were first established, has not yet been determined. It is remarkable that they were not visited by Hwen Tbsang, the Chinese traveller, nor even by the great Chaitanya who is known to have made a pilgrimage to all the known shrines of his time. There can, however, be no doubt as to their recent establishment. Most of the shrines are supposed to have become endued with merit, only in the Kali Yuga. Among the springs mentioned by Captain Pogson in 1831, is Chandur or Chandra Kund, "said to have appeared within the last four months."\* In a list of objects of antiquarian interest issued by the Government of Bengal, it is said that the temple of Sambhunath was built about 450 years ago, and that of Bárabakunda about 400 years ago, but on what evidence I cannot say.†

Sitakund (Spring of Sita) derives its name from a spring consecrated to Sita, the deified heroine of the *Rámdyana*. The spring, however, is no longer in existence. A tradition prevails, that there was at one time a dispute between the followers of Vishnu and Siva about the possession of the spring, and that the dispute was referred for arbitration to one Kali Charan Roy, a zemindar and dewan in the

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204.

† A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, 1879.



local Collectorate,\* who, it is said, caused the spring to be filled up to terminate the difference. According to another account, the destruction of the spring was effected by the then Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta informed me that he had made several attempts to restore the sacred place, but that, though he had dug deep all around the site indicated by the sacred books, he could find no trace of the spring. His belief was, that there had been at the place no such spring as is described in the sacred books, and he told me as a reason for this belief, that the place in question was found devoid of all trace of bitumen which was found by him in the adjacent hot springs.†

\* Kali Charan Roy was dewan of the Chittagong Collectorate from 1785 to 1790. He was one of the farmers with whom Mr. Godwin concluded the Settlement in 1774. On the 5th January, 1785, Mr. Crofts, who at that time was Collector of Chittagong, sold his right title, and interest in the island of Moiscal, for Rs. 40,000 to Kali Charan Roy. The latter was succeeded in the property by his widow Probhabaty, who did not die till 1826. She had no children of her own, but adopted one Chundy Churn, who died in 1820, leaving a son, Shorut Chunder. Shorut being a minor, the estate came, on Probhabaty's death, under the Court of Wards. Shorut Chunder died recently, and the present zemindar is his son, Koilash Chunder. Vide Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pages 165-6, and page 223.

† When this paper was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Mr. V. Ball remarked that though it may be true that there never was a hot spring in the locality mentioned, the absence of any trace of bitumen was a proof of its non-existence. Vide Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for March, 1881, page 61.

Captain Pogson described Sitakund\* as "of pure limpid water," though Bárabakunda is the only spring he actually visited. He, however, subsequently obtained information of the other springs, and sent ■ careful person to bring a description and some bottles of water from each. The following account quoted by Captain Pogson from a *Gazetteer* is noteworthy :† "About twenty miles to the north of Islamabad is a remarkable hot well (named Seetacoond), the surface of which may be inflamed by the application of fire. Like all other remarkable phenomena of nature, it is esteemed sacred by the Hindoos, as is likewise another hot spring near to Monghir." As will presently be seen, the spring of Sitakund is described in the *Devipurana* as hot-watered and igneous, which agrees with the above extract from the *Gazetteer*. But ■ Sitakund is also the name of the outpost containing all the groups of springs and shrines at the locality, I think it is unsafe to conclude, that the specific spring Sitakund existed at the time when the passages above referred to were written.‡ If the

■ Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204.

† Ibid, page 99.

‡ The popular belief is, that the spring of Sitakund is still in existence. In his clever novel, called Chandranath after the god ■ the Chandrasekhara hill, the second edition of which appeared last year, Baboo Khettra Pal Chakravarti makes the hero visit Sitakund (p. 203) in 1266 B. S., that is, about 25 years ago. All old persons, however, who have visited the place, agree in saying that the spring has not been in existence for a much longer time. Baraba-



spring existed in 1831, at the time when Captain Pogson wrote his Narrative, it must have been destroyed in recent times. But the destruction of ■ spring, held in such an esteem by the Hindoos, would not have failed to attract the notice of the authorities. I am not aware of any official report regarding the destruction of the spring.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana*\* of the shrine, and of its destruction :

40-41.—The Rishis said : We have heard before of Sitakund, situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, ■ spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. If thou hast any kindness for us, O sun of knowledge, do thou tell us of it, and thereby dispel our ignorance ; for about this people ask of us.

42-3.—The Suta replied : For the performance of kunda, and not Sitakund, is about 20 miles to the north of Chittagong.

\* ऋषयः कचुः ।

सौताकुण्डं श्रुतं पूर्वं त्रिलोकजनपावनम् ।

चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्थं भारताख्यसन्निभम् ॥ ४० ॥

• यदि तेऽस्ति ■ नाथ तद्वद ज्ञानभास्कर ।

अस्माकमज्ञानम् हर लोके शुद्धा यदीदृशी ॥ ४१ ॥

■ उवाच ।

सौतास्नानविधानार्थं लोकानाम् पावनाय वै ।

महागुह्यं महारम्यं तत् कुण्डन्तु विनिर्मितम् ॥ ४२ ॥

वाङ्मयविमिश्रन्तु निम्नमुष्णोदकं द्विजाः ।

सातपथायितं द्रुमैः सर्वोपवनसन्निभम् ॥ ४३ ॥

Sita's ablution, O twice-born ones, and for the purification of men, was made that spring, the most secret and beautiful, volcanic, deep, hot-watered, surrounded by trees as by an umbrella, forming one continuous grove.

44.—In that lake bathed Sítá, born of the Earth, with her husband and brother-in-law, and devoutly offered oblations to her favourite deity.

45.—There also bathed the lions among the twice-born, as also the chiefs of sages and Munis, who have attained perfection, dwelling to the north of it.

46.—What account shall I give of this spring, the most sanctifying of all? I shall only recount its merits: listen to me, O most excellent of the twice-born.

47.—When Ráma, debarred from accession to his father's throne, had gone to the hermitage of Śara-bhanga, he went, in accordance with his direction, to a city lying towards the north-east.

यच्च सीता पृथिवीजा स्वामिना देवरेण वै ।

स्नात्वा तच्च श्रुदे देवमिष्टं सन्तप्य यत्नतः ॥ ४४ ॥

स्नानं चक्रुः द्विजव्याघ्रा मुनिवृन्दारकास्तथा ।

सिद्धा महर्षयः सन्ति तस्योत्तरनिवासिनः ॥ ४५ ॥

किं वक्तव्यं कुण्डदत्तं महापुण्यविधायकम् ।

वक्ष्यामि तस्य साक्षात्प्राप्तुं द्विजपुङ्गवाः ॥ ४६ ॥

राज्यधरो यदा रामः शरभङ्गाश्रमं ययौ ।

तदुपदेशं धत्वा तु पूर्वोत्तरपुरीममात् ॥ ४७ ॥

48-9.—In that city he ~~was~~ a revered sage, versed in the knowledge of *Tirthas*, a veritable ocean of knowledge, long-armed, clad in yellow garments, and with matted hair. As soon as he ~~saw~~ him, he reverently saluted him with a meek heart, and enquired of him, “Why dost thou, O Lord, live here alone, besmeared with ashes?”

50-51.—That sage, whose whole body was besmeared with ashes, then opening his eyes, saw Rama, the holy, the eternal, the best of men, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana, and thus addressed him :

52.—“I have heard that thou hast taken thy birth in the line of kings, only for our liberation from the dire bonds of the world.

53-4.—“How great is thy fortune, who art followed

पश्येत् पूज्यं महाबाहुं जटामण्डलधारिणम् ।  
 पीतवस्त्रपरीधानं तीर्थज्ञं ज्ञानसागरम् ॥ ४८ ॥  
 दृष्ट्वा जत्वा च पप्रच्छ भक्त्या विनयमानसः ।  
 कथमत्र स्थितं देवमर्हंतं विभूतिपरम् ॥ ४९ ॥  
 ततश्चक्षुर्दृष्ट्वा लयिता दृष्ट्वा रामं समातनम् ।  
 जानकौलक्षणाभ्यान्तु पवित्रं पुरुषोत्तमम् ॥ ५० ॥  
 श्रुत्वा च सं रघुवरं मुनिर्विभूतिधरः ।  
 श्रुतं राजन्यवंशे तु जन्ममात्रप्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ ५१ ॥  
 श्रुत्वा च पवित्रकरणे घोरसंसारबन्धनात् ।  
 भावज्ञानं मुक्तिं कुर्वन् लोके जगत् प्रकाशितम् ॥ ५२ ॥  
 इयं सौता प्रथिवीजा कस्मिंश्चिच्छिवसंचिता ।  
 सुराराध्या मुक्तकेशौ चापवर्गप्रदायिनी ॥ ५३ ॥  
 यस्यानुगामिनौ देवौ तस्य भाग्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।  
 समुद्रस्योत्तरे तीरे भारताख्यासमन्विते ॥ ५४ ॥

by this Sita, born of the Earth, with her hair unbound, the dispenser of salvation, worshipped even by Siva.

55.—“On the north side of the Indian Sea, there is a spring bearing her name, well known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. Know her not merely thy wife. Verily she is Yoganidrá herself.

56.—“Deeds unaccomplishable by thee can easily be achieved by her; she is destined by the Fates to humiliate thy pride (to eclipse thy glory).

57-60.—“It is through my good fortune alone, O Rama, that thou hast come here with her. On the mount of Chandrasekhara, southwest of this country, was built by Siva, a spring of her name. Behold that spring, Sitakund, glowing with fire, situate on the west of Sambhunath, south of the Vayu hills, north of

अस्या नाम्ना कुण्डमस्ति त्रिलोकजनपावनम् ।

न तव गृहिणी राम यांगनिद्रेयमिष्यते ॥ ५५ ॥

तवाशक्तं कर्म यदा सम्यावलीलाकृतम् ।

तवाभिमाने नष्टे तु विधिनैषा नियोजिता ॥ ५६ ॥

भाग्यवशाद्राम जनया समुपस्थितः ।

प्राचीदक्षिणयोर्मध्ये श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे गिरौ ॥ ५७ ॥

तव भर्गेण तन्नाम्ना कुण्डमेकं नियोजितम् ।

स्वयम्भुपश्चिमे विप्रास्तदायुगिरिदक्षिणे ॥ ५८ ॥

नाभिगङ्गोत्तरे चैव फल्गुपश्चिमतः स्थितः ।

ज्योतिर्मयाधः प्रतीक्षां वाङ्वाग्निसमन्दितम् ॥ ५९ ॥

पश्येच्च तु महाकुण्डं सीतानाम्ना नियोजितम् ।

सीता शीतलयुक्ता या येयन्ते सहचारिणी ॥ ६० ॥

Nábhigangá, west of the Phalgu, below Jyotirmaya.  
That Sita is thy cheering consort."

61-3.—Thus speaking, the excellent sage fixed his eyes on them. Greatly wondering, Rama passed the night there with his wife and brother, and at dawn visited Chandrasekhara in the company of the well-wishing Muni who, on arriving there, went into the spring, and facing the sun chanted the two-lettered mantra.

64-66.—Then, leaving Rama at the place, there stepped into the spring Sita, the primitive energy, the revealer of the seat of Brahma, adored by Ananta and other gods, blue as a cloud, ever complacent, three-eyed, red-lipped and fair-haired, her form glowing with fire, adorned with eight hands, and surrounded with banner and chámara (yak-tail).

इत्युक्त्वा तं मुनिवरः परस्परं विलोकयेत् ।

उपित्वा रजनीमेकां रामचन्द्रोऽतिविस्मृतः ॥ ६१ ॥

प्रभातायान्तु शर्वय्याम् भ्रातृजायासमन्वितः ।

ययौ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुनिना धरमेष्टिना ॥ ६२ ॥

गत्वा मुनिवरस्तत्र कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थितः ।

क्षर्याभिमुखमास्थाय जपन्मन्त्रं ह्यक्षरम् ॥ ६३ ॥

रामं विहाय सा सीता कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थिता ।

नीलजीमूतसङ्काशा भुजाष्टपरिशोभिता ॥ ६४ ॥

केशवलम्बिनी देवी अरुणाधरसङ्गिनी ।

लोचनत्रयसंयुक्ता ध्वजचामरवेष्टिता ॥ ६५ ॥

अनन्तादिभिराराध्या ब्रह्मपौत्रप्रकाशिका ।

आदिशक्तिः सुप्रसङ्गा महाबाहुवरूपिणी ॥ ६६ ॥

67.—Standing on the margin, Rama saw Sita immersed in the spring. Believing the spring to have destroyed her, dear to him ■ life, he addressed these words to the Muni :

68-9.—“This spring shall remain in existence for the first four thousand years of the Kali age, and shall after that time vanish from the sight of man. Whoever out of devotion will drink the water, shall obtain the same fruit as may be got by immersion, and shall not live any longer upon earth.”

70-71.—Saying this, the foe of Ravana went to the Mani hill. Having viewed the linga and bathed in the Lavanākhyā, he gratified the sage with humble and respectful words, and then returned to Chandrasekhara.

तटस्थो राघवः पश्येत् सीतां कुण्डनिवासिनीं ।  
मम प्राणहरं कुण्डं विभाव्य रघुवंशजः ॥ ६७ ॥  
सम्भाष्य तं मुनिवरमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ।  
कलेशतुःसहस्राणि वर्षाणि लक्षणायतम् ॥ ६८ ॥  
स्थितं कुण्डं गुप्तमाभीत् मानवादर्शनं भवेत् ।  
भक्तिं कृत्वा तु सीतायाः यः कश्चिद्वा जलं पिबेत् ॥ ६९ ॥  
कुण्डदानफलं प्राप्य न पुनर्वर्तते भुवि ।  
इत्युक्त्वासौ रावणारिर्मणिपर्वतमूर्धनि ॥ ७० ॥  
गत्वा दृष्ट्वा शिवलिङ्गं लवणाब्धौ निमज्जयन् ।  
आगत्य चन्द्रशेखरं प्रसाद्य मुनिमीश्वरं ।  
सन्तुष्टतयामास रामोऽपि विनयान्वितः ॥ ७१ ॥



72.—Then Rama, delighted, started with Sita and his brother, for the banks of the Godávarí.

According to the above account, Rama, having visited the hermitage of Sarabhangā, by his direction turned towards a north-eastern city, where another sage informed him, that on the south-west of that city, there was a sacred spring of the name of his consort Sita (Sitakund), who, he informed to his surprise, was no other than Yoganidra herself. Rama is then said to have visited this spring in the company of his wife and brother and the learned sage. Finding Sita immersed in the spring, whither she had gone to bathe without his knowledge, Rama thought she had been drowned, and cursed the spring as the destroyer of the princess. According to the malediction which, he it observed, is not to have immediate effect, the spring would cease to be visible to human eyes, at the end of four thousand years of the fourth age. The *Chinnamastā Tantra* is, however, ready with another explanation of the origin of the shrine and of its disappearance.\* It

सीतामादाय सधाता भिन्नाङ्गनचयोपमा ।

परमाङ्गादः पुनर्गोदावरीं प्रति ॥ ७२ ॥

इति देवीपुराणे चैत्रमाहात्म्ये चण्डिकाखण्डे शिवरहस्यसूत्रे  
श्रीश्रीचन्द्रमेश्वरप्राप्तिरहस्योऽध्यायः ।

■ सीतामाभिसमं कुण्डं पातालं कुण्डमुत्तमं ॥

सीतापरीक्षणार्थं तत्पूर्वेऽग्निः चचार च ।

■ अथाप सा सीता परीक्षामनुतापिता ॥

relates that the spring was the scene of the ordeal by fire of Sita, that it was excavated by the hand of the great Hanumat, and that it was cursed by Sita herself as the site of her sufferings. The explanation itself is, however, less important than the manner of its narration. Sita is not described there merely as Yoganidrā herself, or the Primeval Sakti or Energy, and Rama the divine hero who would curb the pride of the Rakshasas. They are the veritable Supreme Duad, the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort who came over to the shrine to offer their oblations. The spiritual guide, according to Hindoo ideas, it is well known, is the embodiment of the Deity itself on earth. The recognition accordingly of Rama and Sita as the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort is significant. A tradition has been mentioned above, which attributes the filling up of the spring to a dispute between the Sivaite and Vishnuvite. It would therefore seem, that this second legend was probably written at a period of Vishnuvite supremacy.

युगान्तेनाखिलं सर्वं दह्यते तेन वज्रिना ।

सौताकोपागमलो यत्र कुण्डस्तत्र विचक्षणं ॥

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ \*

यत्नेन निर्मितं कुण्डं परीक्षार्थं हम्भूता ।

कुण्डपार्श्वचरो भूत्वा तिष्ठति हनुमान् वली ॥

इति विष्णुमहात्म्ये महाकालीसम्वादे पार्वतीमन्त्रप्रदस्य

स्थाननिर्णयो नाम द्वितीयः पटलः ।

However, it may have been, apart from the contradictory nature of the two accounts which in itself furnishes a strong argument against their authenticity, both of them—internally incoherent and contradictory, as they are—have not the impress of the high authority of Valmiki, the most ancient writer on the life and deeds of Rama, and perhaps the one, who in consequence describes them with the nearest approach to truth. It is true that a few places in the Chittagong Division bear the name of Rama, so that it might apparently seem that the prince had something or other to do with them. There is, for instance, Ramoo, where it is said Rama commenced the Setubandha bridge, but, preferring not to enter by the postern gate the capital of Ravana (to which the bridge would have led him, had he gone that way), he turned round, and constructed a separate bridge at Ramesvara to lead him to the front gate of the metropolis of Ceylon. In the *Patal Puri* (lit. the nether world), in a cavern in the hill of Chandranath to which reference will presently be made, a huge stone is pointed out as the cooking utensil of Sita. Similarly, a place or two in the adjoining districts of Noakhally and the Hill Tracts, may be mentioned as bearing the name of Rama and his wife. This reason, however, does not commend itself as very conclusive. For it is a fact that may be well established by numerous instances, that the Brahmins took delight in associating shrines

with renowned ~~places~~ in their religious history, in order to ensure and enhance their sanctity.\* Regarding Rama alone, thus we read of the Doobrajapore rocks far off in the district of Beerbhoom, consisting of stones that fell off from his æerial chariot on his return from the Himalayas, when he had gone up there to fetch stones for the construction of ~~the~~ bridge to Ceylon. Adjacent places ~~are~~ shown, as where his wife Sita sat and bathed. A boulder in the neighbourhood is also pointed out, ~~as~~ having been caused by Ravana's attending ~~a~~ call of nature.† In the same way, Rama's advent is also claimed for the province of Orissa, (wrongly identifying it with *Kishkindhyá* mentioned in the Ramayana), where the Rajah of Cuttack up to this time wears ~~a~~ tail in ~~all~~ public receptions, more ~~as~~ a testimony to his descent from the monkey allies of the great hero, than by way of vindication of Mr. Darwin's theory. There are

■ "The hot springs of India have attracted the notice of many observers. In the majority of instances these remarkable outbursts of water, at a temperature considerably above that of the waters, ~~and~~ even of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, often charged with various gases and emitting strong odours, have been endowed by the superstitious and ignorant with wondrous virtues, ~~and~~ have been supposed to be the result of ~~the~~ miraculous interposition of divine energy." Dr. Oldham on the Thermal Springs of India, page 1, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.

† A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, ~~pages~~ 4-6.

several places bearing the name of King Báli, the brother of Sugriva, who was treacherously killed by Rama; *Bálikáti*, a river; *Bálikánta*, also a river; *Bálishi*, a village. There is also a festival called *Báli Játá*. The *Sabdakalpadruma* also mentions a hill at the place called *Kishkindhya*.\* Against this identification—plausible as it is—is the unfortunate situation of the river Pampá (in Mysore) which Rama is said to have visited, before entering *Kishkindhyá* the kingdom of the monkeys which, it would seem, coincided nearly with the present kingdom of Mysore.

It is not improbable, therefore, that the above legends of Sitakund are another of those religio-historical forgeries so common all over India. Certain it is, that Rama's journey southwards was made through the middle of the Deccan and not through Orissa and the Coasts, much less through Chittagong and Sitakund; the following being the most important places in the hero's itinerary as described by Valmiki: the Tamásá, the Vedaśruti, the Gomati, the Ganges, Batsyadesa, Prayága, Chitrakuta, the Mandákini, Dandaka, the Godavari, Krauncha, the Pampa, Rishyamuka, Kishkindhya, and Ceylon. There is absolutely no mention, in the great epic of Valmiki, of Rama having gone so far north-eastward as Chittagong, after having visited the hermitage of Sarabhangas.

\* कृष्णः पुं चोददेश्यपर्वतविशेषः । *Sabdakalpadruma*, p. 579, Vol. I.



The narrative of this visit ■ contained\* in Canto V of Book III. When Rama ■ about to enter the hermitage of this sage, he ■ with the Rishi, Indra the Dreaded Thunderer, in all the paraphernalia of his high office, who disappeared on Rama's nearer approach. Replying to Rama's question, the Muni said that the lord of heaven had been to his hermitage to escort him to heaven, but that the Muni could not comply with his request and leave the earth, before seeing Rama, to whom he offered all the merits of his long penance so that the prince by virtue of them might ascend to heaven. Rama, of course, declined the gift, and requested the sage to point out a meet place for his home. The following is his reply :

“Sutíkshna's woodland home is near,  
A glorious saint of life austere,  
True to the path of duty ; he  
With highest bliss will prosper thee.  
Against the stream thy course must be  
Of this fair brook Mandákiní,  
Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide ;  
Then to his cottage turn aside.  
There lies thy path, but, ere thou go,  
Look on me, dear one, till I throw  
Aside this mould that girds ■ in  
As casts the snake his withered skin.\*”



On the sage giving up the ghost, the holy men who dwelt around flocked to Rama, and solicited his protection against the Rakshasas, which he readily granted. We now come to the Seventh Canto in which Rama is then made to visit this hermitage of Sutikshna. After the exchange of proper greeting, Rama said :

“ But now O saint, I pray thee tell  
Where I within this wood may dwell,  
For I by Sarabhangā old  
The son of Gotama, was told  
That thou in every lore art wise  
And seest all with thy loving eyes.”\*

In reply to this, the sage begged Rama to take up his abode at his hermitage. Rama passed the night there. On the following morning he asked leave of the sage, and prayed for his permission to explore the Dandaka. The sage answered as follows :

“ Go with thy brother, Rama, go,  
Pursue thy path untouched by woe :  
Go with thy faithful Sita, she  
Still like ■ shadow follows thee.  
Roam Dandak wood observing well  
The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,  
Pure saints whose ordered souls adhere  
To penance rites and vows austere.”†

■ Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VII, Page 28.

† Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VIII, Page 32.

Thus it is clear, that there is no mention whatever in the *Ramayana*, of Rama having passed through Chittagong on his way downwards to the Deccan. The geographical position itself of Chittagong and of the Godavari (to the banks of which Rama in the above legend is said to have bent his way on leaving Chittagong), renders it quite improbable. The attribution of the ordeal by fire of Sita to a hotspring is not a new idea.\* The Sitakund of Monghyr is similarly credited with being the scene of the same ordeal, which, it is scarcely necessary to say, really took place at Ceylon, if the father of Aryan poetry is to be believed. The principle of human nature which led to this religious fabrication, is not, however, inexplicable. “I think it is in Macedon,” reasoned Fluellen,† “where Alexander is born. I tell you captain,—if you look in the maps of the world, I warrant, you shall find in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is poth like. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth;

\* In p. 209, Part I, Vol. XVII of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, General Cunningham mentions a spring called Sitakund in Kelat, which is nine miles from Dwara, and five from Monali. In Mr. Duncan's account of the Travels in Ceylon, of a Fakcer named Prann Poory (p. 39, Vol. V of the Asiatic Researches), it is stated that “our traveller states that leaving this tank, he proceeded on to a station called *Seetakund*, where Rama placed his wife Seta on the occasion of his ■■■ with her ravisher Ravan.”

† Shakespeare, King Henry V, Act IV, Scene VII.

it ■ called Wye at Monmouth; put it is out of my prains, what ■ the name of the other river; put it is all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both."

It is not a little remarkable, that Sitakund, the name of a spring which, no matter whether it existed or not, now exists no longer, should (*lucus a lucendo*) give its name to the outpost, and surpass the surrounding shrines ■ fame. Perhaps during a period of temporary Vishnuvite supremacy, it may have been indiscriminately used for, and may have eventually supplanted, *Panchakrośa* which, according to the sacred books, contain all the holy shrines of the place. Like the *Panchakrośī* of Benares, it stretches over 5 kroses (or 10 miles) round the village of Sitakund, being bounded\* on the east by the Mandakini, on the west by Vyasakunda, on the south by Bārabakunda and on the north by the Champaka Forest. "This land called Panchakrośa," said Vishnu,† "is the cause of the holy Nirvana. Many a

■ पश्चिमे व्यासकुण्डश्च पूर्वे मन्दाकिनी स्मृता ।

उत्तरे चम्पकारणं दक्षिणे वाङ्वागमलः ॥

\* एतत् क्षेत्रं मया प्रोक्तं पञ्चक्रोशं महाफलं ।

इति वाराहीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे चन्द्रशेखर-

वर्णना नाम ■ पटलः ।

† पञ्चक्रोशमिदं प्रोक्तं शिवनिर्वाणकारणं ■

एतस्मिन्नक्षेत्रे सन्ति कुण्डान्यन्यानि सर्वतः ।

सुगोप्यानि प्रथमेन मम प्रौतिकराशि च ॥

*Ibid.*

spring is contained in it, most sacred and delightful to me." By far the most frequented of these shrines are Vyásakunda, Bárabakunda, Lavanákhyā, and the temples of Chandranath and Samibhunath.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana*\* of the origin of the shrines of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda.

26-27.—“Do thou tell us, O chief of the Brahmins,” said the Rishis, “why Siva, forsaking Kasi and Kailas, resides here in secrecy? Why he said, ‘I shall dwell on the mount of Chandrasekhara in the Kali Yuga;’ and why thy preceptor remains there, abandoning all else?”

28-29.—“In days of yore,” the Suta replied, “seeing the three worlds animate and inanimate, pervaded by the sea of curd, and immersed in the waters of causation, the three-eyed lordly spirit created Brahmá and Vishnu for the purposes of creation.

\* अथ उवाच ।

वद विप्रेन्द्र तत्सर्वं कथं भूतलमागतः ।

विहाय काशीं कैलाशं कस्मात् श्रीचन्द्रभूषणः ॥ २६ ॥

कलौ तिष्ठामि इत्युक्तं श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे नगे ।

कथमेतं मुखसचैव चास्तेऽन्यत् सकलं त्यजन् ॥ २७ ॥

सूत उवाच ।

पुरा दधिसलिलेन व्याप्तं त्रिभुवनं वरं ।

कारणसलिले मग्नं ब्रह्माण्डं सचराचरम् ॥ २८ ॥

दृष्ट्वा तथाविधं सर्वं भगवान् भूतभावनः ।

सृष्ट्यै ब्रह्मविष्णु च सृष्ट्यर्थं चाग्न्यकः स्वयम् ॥ २९ ॥

30-31.—“Thus created, they, infatuated with vanity, considered themselves supreme, and genitor even of the womb from which they themselves had sprung. Even in his very presence they spoke slightly of him. Then the god, disappearing, became an image of light.

32-35.—“From the sky he then addressed the ignorant gods thus : ‘ O lotus-born, of the thirteen lingas planted in Kási and other places, I have spoken to you of twelve. Only one I have concealed from thee. During the Kali Yuga, O lotus-born, I shall dwell there with Párvatí. There is no doubt of this. Do thou follow us thither with the never-dying gods.’ Thus saying, Siva with Umá vanished from their sight, and went to that place.

भूत्वा तौ तस्य निकटेऽद्वारेण विमोदितौ ।  
 हतवन्तौ स्वगर्भं च खट्वारौ तौ बभूवतुः ॥ ३० ॥  
 जल्पन्तौ तस्य प्रमुखे ततः सोऽपि न दृश्यते ।  
 अन्तर्हि त्वा तदा सोऽपि क्योतिर्लिङ्गं तदाभवत् ॥ ३१ ॥  
 अज्ञामवन्तौ तत् तौ च उवाच गगनस्थितः ।  
 येषु येषु च स्थानेषु मन्त्रिङ्गं स्थापितं मया ॥ ३२ ॥  
 त्रयोदशविभागेन काश्चादिषु ॥ ३३ ॥  
 द्वादशं कथितं तुभ्यं लिङ्गमेकं जुगोप च ॥ ३४ ॥  
 कलौ तिष्ठामि तत्रैव पार्वत्या मात्र संशयः ।  
 यूयं गच्छत वेद्येव ममिच्छेऽहन्तु तत्र च ॥ ३५ ॥  
 ममिच्छथ ततः पश्चादभरैस्तत्र पद्मज ।  
 इत्युक्त्वानार्चितः शम्भुस्तत्रागाद् ॥ ३६ ॥

36-37.—Even now the linga may be seen there, called Haragauri. The sinless place remained very secret in the first three ages. For the weal of men, the bull-drawn god dwells in the Kali Yuga in that sacred place with the never-dying ones.”

Having thus premised the presence in the sacred place, of Siva and his consort, of Brahmá, Vishnu, and other gods, the story then runs as follows :

38.—Once on a time Vyasa, the son of Parás'ara, the subduer of his passions, began to practise asceticism in the company of the wise residents of *Kasi* (Benares), full of beatitude, knowing the Supreme Spirit, and wearing matted hair.

39-42.—Seeing him the son of Matsyagandhá, of unknown lineage, caste, and character, seated with

अथापि दृश्यते लिङ्गे हरगौरौति संज्ञकम् ।  
 तत् क्रियते चातिमुद्यं चासीत्तीर्थं च नामधे ॥ ३९ ॥  
 कसौ प्रकाशकपेण लोकानाम्नु चिताय वै ।  
 सकलैश्वर्यैस्तोर्ध्वं वसन्तं (?) तं दृष्ट्वा सनम् ॥ ४० ॥  
 एकदा व्यासदेवोऽपि काशीस्थेन निवासिभिः ।  
 कर्तुम् समारम्भे वाराणस्यः परम्परा ॥ ४१ ॥  
 सत्त्वामन्दनिमग्नैस्तैर्जटामण्डलधारिभिः ।  
 तपसा धीतकलुषैः ब्रह्मविद्भिर्विवेकिभिः ॥ ४२ ॥  
 शिवज्ञानाम्नुभिः सर्वं ज्ञातं अज्ञमादिकम् ।  
 दृष्ट्वा तैस्तं सत्त्वाप्राप्तं नारायणमिवापरम् ॥ ४३ ॥  
 जातिशैलविहीनं तं सत्त्वमन्वात्मजं शुचिं ।  
 एकासनसमाधातम् एकचेन-निवासिनम् ॥ ४४ ॥  
 कुलहीनं तच्च मुनीनामिव तिलकम् ।  
 क्रियते तदा कोपो व्यासाय चेनवासिभिः ॥ ४५ ॥



themselves on the same seat, and dwelling in the same holy place, although he was very wise, the ornament of the sages, like unto Vishnu himself, the ire of the holy dwellers was roused against Vyasa.

43-44.—Full of jealousy, Bhrigu addressed to him the following words : “Who art thou ? Whence dost thou come ? Whose son and of what family art thou ? Where didst thou formerly dwell ? Speak the truth.”

45-46.—Vyasa replied : “I am the son of Parasara by Matsyagandhá. I have come here to see you, and to worship the god Visvanath. I would dwell with you, O sages of good actions. Let a seat amongst you be granted to me.”

47-48.—While he was thus speaking, Vyasa was interrupted by Bhrigu with these angry and unseemly words : “Hear, O ye Munis, the account of his

नतो भृगुपतिस्तन्नु प्रोवाचेर्धायुतं वचः ॥ ४३ ॥

भृगुर्वाच ।

कस्वम् कुत दद्यातातः कस्य स्तनः कुलश्च किम् ।

कस्मिन्निवसतिः पूर्वं वद सत्यं वचश्च नः ॥ ४४ ॥

व्यास उवाच ।

पराशरसुतोऽहम् वै मत्स्यगन्धोदरोद्भवः ।

युष्मान् द्रष्टुम् दद्यातातो विम्बनाथस्य सेवया ॥ ४५ ॥

पुष्पाभिस्तु सदावासं करोमि मुनिपुङ्गवाः ।

साधुभिः कृतकर्मभिर्दीयतां स्थितिरुत्तमा ॥ ४६ ॥

इत्येवं वाच्यमानस्तु वचोभिस्तु समन्वितैः ।

निरस्तो भृगुणा व्यासः कामक्रोधविवर्द्धिभिः ॥ ४७ ॥

मत्स्यगन्धासुतस्त्वं हि शृणु वाचः कुलोज्ज्वलितः ।

शृणुध्वं मुनयः सर्वे अस्य जन्मप्रकीर्तनम् ॥ ४८ ॥

birth, and thou too, the son of Matsyāgandhā, the disgrace of thy family, listen to my words.

49-53.—“While thy mother, begotten of a fish and with ■ fishy smell, was a ferry-woman in the Jumna, Parasara one day came to the bank of the river and entered her boat. To the Muni's sight she immediately appeared to be endowed with beauty and grace, breathing perfume, a soul-ravishing maid of sixteen. Seeing her, the Muni became full of desire. Thou art the offspring of this union, and art neither a Kunda, nor a Golaka. How canst thou presume to practise asceticism with us? Go to thy own proper place. Thou shouldst not tarry here for a moment.”

54-56.—Hearing these insulting words, Vyasa, the son of Satyavati and Parasara, being irate, thought of sacrificing himself to Siva (thus making Siva

यदा ते जननी चासीत् यमुनायां रूपेश्वरी ।  
 सौमजातात् गन्धयुता तरणीमृहीता सती ॥ ४९ ॥  
 देवात् पराशरस्तत्र आगत्य यमुनातटे ।  
 आरुह्य तरणीं तस्याः मुनेर्दर्शनतः क्षणात् ॥ ५० ॥  
 सुमध्या सुरसा साति बभूवातिममोरसा ।  
 सुगन्धा षोडशान्दीया रूपलावण्यसंयुता ॥ ५१ ॥  
 दृष्ट्वा तां सच कामान्धो रतिमग्नः कृतस्तया ।  
 तच्चोद्भवोऽसि सः प्राज्ञः न कुण्डः न च गोलकः ॥ ५२ ॥  
 सोऽस्माभिस्त्वं तपः कर्तुम् शक्नोसि कथमत्र च ।  
 गन्तव्यं तव स्वस्थानं न स्थेयं क्षणमत्र च ॥ ५३ ॥  
 श्रुत्वा पराशरमुतो वचस्तदात्तनिन्दकम् ।  
 बध्मं शिष्याय दास्यामि चेत्तसीदम् विभाव्य च ॥ ५४ ॥

guilty of his death), and said, "O vile and false Siva, holder of the trident, blue-throated, and hide-garmented, why dost thou appear *Asiva* or inauspicious to me? Why dost thou harass me so often? This very day I will leave this place."

57.—When he the subduer of his passions was so minded, the bull-drawn and blue-throated god made himself manifest to him the chief of the wise men, and spoke as follows :

58-60.—" Certes thou art a portion of mine, O subduer of thy passions, and learned in the cause of things. There is a seat of mine on Mount Chandrasekhara, very secret, and unattainable even by the gods. There in Chandrasekhara I will always reside in the Kali Yuga with Uma.

अहो शिवाशिवं मे न वर्तते शूलकण्ठ पुनः ।

कथं विदुष्वहं मे ते मौलिकण्ठाजिनाम्बर ॥ ५५ ॥

इतो गच्छामि अथैव पामराज्ञानवशक ।

अमर्षाविष्ट इत्युक्त्वा आसः सत्यवतीश्रुतः ॥ ५६ ॥

चेचाद्वहिर्यदा गन्तुम् समन्त्रं परमपः ।

तदा ह्यपासनः साक्षादभवत् तस्य पूर्वतः ॥ ५७ ॥

उवाच तं ज्ञानिवरं मौलिकण्ठो

म सन्देहो मदंशस्त्रम् शृणु वाचं परमप ॥ ५८ ॥

चेचं मेऽस्तीह मुञ्चं तत् देवानामपि दुर्लभम् ।

महारम्यं महागुह्यं श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुने ॥ ५९ ॥

देवाभिलषितं चेचं आश्रिकोणेऽस्ति तच्च वित् ।

सदा कलौ च साक्षामि उभया चन्द्रशेखरे ॥ ६० ॥

61-68.—“ Know, O Sage, that Chandrasēkhara surpasses all other sacred places. It is covered on all sides with branches of trees, which protect it from the sun and rain. The *kokilas* sing there with sweet voice. In the recesses of the forest dwell the sages, their looks probing the Inmost Cause of the universe; Brahmā and other gods bathe there day and night; and in the hermitages dwell the Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Bhairavas. In that forest are trees with flowers and fruits of the six seasons. The forest itself is in one place very deep and secret, and in another place rocky, like the moon half-eclipsed. On the south-west of the forest, O subduer of thy passions, is the Sindhu (the Ocean), the King of all *tirthas*, to whose embrace the sacred

सर्वेष्वधिकं विदि श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुने ।  
 सर्वतो द्रुमशाखाभिष्ठादितं वारितानयम् ॥ ६१ ॥  
 वनप्रियादिभिस्तत्र कूजितं मधुरैः स्वरैः ।  
 ज्ञानिभिस्तत्तदृष्टेयं श्रोयते गहनान्तरे ॥ ६२ ॥  
 यत्र ब्रह्मादिभिस्तत्र खाने चक्रे चरुनिशं ।  
 समन्त्रा यस्ताश्च भैरवास्तथा ॥ ६३ ॥  
 सिद्धा महर्षयो यत्र नित्यमासन् तदाश्रमे ।  
 बहुस्तु-फलपुष्पाद्यैः पादपाः सन्ति तदने ॥ ६४ ॥  
 अप्रकाशसन्निभं वनं सर्वतुंगरोभनं ।  
 अन्ये नगविशेषे यत् प्रत्यासन्नार्द्धचन्द्रवत् ॥ ६५ ॥  
 तस्य दक्षिणतः सिन्धुसौधराजः परन्तप ।  
 यस्य संसर्गमायाता गङ्गा भामौरथी द्विज ॥ ६६ ॥  
 हिमाद्रिर्मे स्थाप्यः तथा श्रीचन्द्रशेखरः ।  
 श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे देवैः सदा स्थास्यामि चे मुने ॥ ६७ ॥

Ganga offers herself, led by Bhagiratha. As the Himalaya is dear to me, ■ is Chandrasekhara. There shall I, O Muni, dwell with the gods."

Thus instructing Vyasa, the god then made himself manifest to him in his own proper form which is described at length in the text.

74-78.—"In his own form, O Munis, he then said to Vyasa: "Go there, O most excellent of sages, subduer of thy passions, where I shall dwell with Uma. Thou shalt attain all thy desires; have no doubt about thy success. That seat of mine is the giver of health and wealth, and after death, of salvation. There also dwells the rice-giving Annapurna, delighting in rice and nectar. In this seat of perfection shall I dwell, the lord of Parvati." Saying this to the Muni, the god disappeared.

हृन्मोपदेशं तस्मै च स बभूव परमपः ।

शुद्धस्रष्टिककुन्देन्दुप्रतिमः कुण्डलोन्मलः ॥ ६८ ॥

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■ \* \* \* ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

एतैः रूपविशेषैस्तु भगवानुभया सह ।

वसामि तत्र इत्युक्तं व्यासाय मुनिपुङ्गवाः ॥ ७४ ॥

■ गच्छ मुनिश्रेष्ठ मल्लिकार्जुने परमप ।

सदाभीष्टं प्राप्स्यसि चेत् सत्यं सिद्धिर्न संशयः ॥ ७५ ॥

मत्तत्त्वेनं शिवदं स्वस्वमन्ते च मोक्षदायकम् ।

अन्नपूर्णा निवसति सदाश्रुपधारिणी ॥ ७६ ॥

वच च सुलभास्ते चेदन्नद्राक्षाविलासिनौ ।

एवम्भूतं सिद्धपौठे वसन्तम् (?) पार्वतीपतिम् ॥ ७७ ॥

इत्युक्त्वा नन्दधे शम्भुः मुनये ज्ञानशक्तिने ॥ ७८ ॥



79-81.—As Nārada had ascended the Śrísaila hill, even so went Vyasa, the son of Satyavati, to Chandrasekhara, hearing these words of Śiva. There he began to practise asceticism, his mind always concentrated in meditation, repeating the five-lettered mantra, sometimes covered with snow, sometimes near ■ fire, sometimes fasting altogether, absorbed in Pránáyāma, all his thoughts devoted to the meditation on god.

82.—Pleased at seeing him so devoted, the Self-created then appeared to him. “Ask for a boon,” he said, “O subdner of thy passions.”

83-85.—Having heard this, Vyasa then replied with folded hands—“When the Munis residing at Kasi spoke scornfully to me, it was by thy command O Lord, that I came here. Dwell thou here, as was thy command while in Kasi. This is the dear boon that I ask of thee.”

ततः सत्यवतीसूनुः श्रुत्वा वाक्यं हरस्य तु ।  
यद्यौ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं श्रीशैले नारदो यथा ॥ ७९ ॥  
गत्वा तपः समारम्भे सदा च ध्यानमानसः ।  
हिमजालहतः कचिदुत्ताशनसमौपतः ॥ ८० ॥  
निराहारः कदा शेते तद्भावभावनागतः ।  
प्राणायामगतः कचित् पञ्चाक्षरमनुं अपन् ॥ ८१ ॥  
दृष्ट्वा तपोरतश्चैव स्वयम्भूर्दर्पमागतः ।  
भूत्वा प्रत्यक्षमवदत् वरं गृह्य परन्तप ॥ ८२ ॥  
नत् श्रुत्वा भगवान् व्यासः कृताञ्जलिपुटोज्ज्वलौत् ।  
गर्हितं मे यदा देव मुनिभिः काशीवासिभिः ॥ ८३ ॥  
तवोपदेशाद् गन्तव्यमचैकेन मया विभो ॥ ८४ ॥  
कृतं यथोपदेशं मे काशीस्थेन महात्मना ।

86-87.—“Do thou, O sage,” the god answered, “remain on the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the *tirthas*, such ■ Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful.”

88-89.—With these words, the god, while yet in the presence of Vyasa, pierced the earth with his trident. Then there arose a spring full of water, with igneous brilliance in the interior, and covered with smoke.

90-93.—Delighted at this sight, Vyasa assumed the

तथा भवाय गिरिम् देहि चैवं वरं सुहृत् ॥ ८५ ॥

समस्ततीर्थैस्त्वद्याच तीर्थाधिष्ठितविग्रहः ।

निष्ठ सिन्धुसमीपे च श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे मुने ॥ ८६ ॥

मयादीनीह तीर्थानि यानि सन्तीह भूतले ।

तान्यथ स्थापयित्वा तु त्रैलोक्यतारणं कुरु ॥ ८७ ॥

सिद्धिर्भवतु तेऽभीष्टा इत्युक्त्वास्ते स्थापयिष्ये ।

■ तस्य पश्चतः शतैः विग्रहैर्न विद्वन्वते ॥ ८८ ॥

येऽपि कुण्डास्तिस्रस्तु वारिपूर्णा बभूव ह ।

मस्यान्तरेऽग्निना दौग्धिः क्रियते धूमवेष्टितः ॥ ८९ ॥

ब्रह्मण्डगतो ■ पश्चिमतः स्वयम् ।

परं ध्यानगतश्चास्ते धृत्वा पाषाणविग्रहम् ॥ ९० ॥

द्विभुजमुपवीतश्च अटामण्डलधारिणं ।

चर्माम्बरपरीधानं कवीन्द्रैः सेवितं स्वयम् ॥ ९१ ॥

यस्य भाषास्त्रिभिर्दम् वेदमार्गस्थितं जगत् ।

वेदान्त-महासिन्धुं निर्मथ्य ज्ञानदण्डकैः ॥ ९२ ॥

पुमातु स तु त्रैलोक्यं धर्माधर्मप्रकाशकः ॥ ९३ ॥

इति देवीपुराणे चैवमाहात्म्ये स्वयम्भुरहस्यकथने चण्डिकाखण्डे

सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ।

form of stone, and became absorbed in meditation on its west side. Even now he may be seen there, two-handed, wearing the sacred thread, and clotted hair, clothed in deer-skin, the expositor of virtue and vice, who, churning the ocean of Vedic literature with the rod of his knowledge, for the first time explained the whole universe according to the dictum of the Vedas. Let him purify the world."

Such was the origin of the shrine of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda. As in the legend of Sitakund the spring is to vanish from human sight at the end of four thousand years of the Kali Yuga, so in this legend also the shrines are to be manifest to human eyes at the commencement of the same Yuga. In both cases, great names in history have been brought forward to father the foundation of the shrines. Rama, it is known, is the deified hero of the Ramayana. Vyasa, according to the late Mr. Sherring,\* has two or three temples dedicated to him in Benares; but he is not generally considered to be a deified hero. Nevertheless, no name is so distinguished in the whole field of Indian history as the name of this sage. To him is ascribed the compilation of the Vedas and Puranas. To him is attributed the fatherhood of the fathers of the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sage should have been made to

\* Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindus, p. 118.

play the part that he has been made to play in the foregoing passage. This, however, is not the first time, that he has been credited with the ambition of founding ■ shrine.\* The *Annadámangala* relates a like attempt on his part. Expelled by Siva from Kási (Benares), Vyasa began to practise extremely mortifying austerities, in the hope of raising a shrine that would, in every respect, surpass the Kási of Siva. He had well nigh succeeded in his object, when Uma, Siva's consort, one day appeared before him in the guise of an old, deaf, and decrepit woman, and asked him what merit a man would acquire by dying at his *tírtha*. Vyasa replied that the man would obtain salvation. But still the old woman pretended not to have heard his answer, and repeated the question again and again. Vexed at this, Vyasa said that the man would become an ass, who died there. Siva's consort, then assuming her own form, said "so be it," and vanished from the place.\* The later attempt of Vyasa to found a *tírtha* in Chittagong appears to have been more successful. He not only succeeds in conciliating Siva, but also obtains from him the much-desired boon. "Do thou, O sage," the god is made to have said, "remain on

- ডাকিয়া কহিলা ক্রোধে কাণের কুহরে ।
- গর্দভ হইবে বুড়ী এখানে যে মরে ॥
- বুঝিনু বুঝিনু বলি করে ঢাকি কাণ ।
- তথাস্থ বলিয়া দেবী কৈলা অন্তর্ধান ॥

*Annadámangala*, p. 158. This legend is based on the *Kasikhandā* of the *Skanda Purāna*. •

the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, — the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the *tirthas*, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful.”

The pilgrim to the shrines of Sitakund generally takes up his quarters at the lodging-houses of the Adhikáris, ■ class of Brabmins, who send out emissaries called Pándás to almost every district of the Lower Provinces, in order to persuade people to undertake a pilgrimage to these shrines. These Pándás serve as guides to the pilgrims, and, in the shape of remuneration, get from the Adhikaris their passage-money as well as a portion, generally the fourth part, of their eventual gain; for the Adhikaris, besides the rent of the lodging-houses, also receive whatever the pilgrim offers to the gods, clothes, cows, horses, palkis, silver and gold ornaments,—the *kar* or the visiting cess, which consists of eight annas only under the District Magistrate's orders, being paid to the Mohunta for the maintenance of the shrines. The earnings of the Adhikaris average Rs. 5,000, and sometimes rise to Rs. 10,000. They have now-a-days found competitors in people of other castes, who also have set up lodging-houses of their own. The most opulent Adhikaris are Ramahari Adhikari, Chandrasekhara Adhikari, Gopínath Adhikari, and Akhil Chandra Adhikari. Hinduism is, however, at a discount in Chittagong.



The few Brāhmins that may be found there, ■ certainly not the ornaments of the learned class. Some excellent rules were framed by Mr. Kirkwood, lately Magistrate of Chittagong, for the construction and ventilation of the lodging-houses. These, together with a hospital erected near the local *basar*, have served to prevent the spread of disease which, in former days, used to originate and spread around, from the large concourse of people that assembled at the *melas*. The Adhikaris have now to take out licenses from the Magistrate to lodge pilgrims, which are refused, if their lodging-houses do not conform with the prescribed rules.

Settling himself in one of these lodging-houses, the pilgrim proceeds to bathe in the *Vyāsakunda* referred to above. This is a small tank, 120 × 90 hands, full of mud and shrubs, the water being so impure that one would abhor the touch of it. I ■ informed that, small as the tank was, it was believed that no one could swim across it, or throw ■ stone from one side of it to the other. After bathing in the *Kunda* which, however, does not indicate any signs of being of an igneous nature as related in the legend translated above, the pilgrim makes offerings to the *Bata* (*Ficus Indica*) tree, underneath which Vyasa is said to have performed the *Asvamedha* sacrifice.\* This tree

■ ————— वटसमीपतः ।

यत्रान्धमेधमकरोदृषिभिर्वादरायणः ॥

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे

तृतीयः पटलः ।

represents the primeval Bata tree, under which the great Vishnu rested before the creation. It serves as the veritable "door-keeper" of the god Chandranath, and is the presiding deity of the plain below.\* It is said never to grow old, and to flower in all seasons for the worship of the god. The pilgrim throws upon the tree-deity clods of earth, of which it is said to be very fond, and circumambulates it. The temple of Vyasa is pointed out, lying on the margin of the spring in a very dilapidated state.

Thence the pilgrim proceeds to the temple of *S'ambhunáth*, or *Svayambhunáth*, the Self-created Lord. As you proceed, the mount Chandrasekhara appears before you in full majesty. You feel a presence. No wonder that they said that the gods resided there. Are the Munis still meditating there on God, under the tall pine-trees? Are the gods and nymphs disporting themselves on the hillocks? All the old Hindu associations force themselves on you despite your Western education. The feeling, however, fades away, when you come to the site of the *Sítákund* mentioned above. According to the *Varahi Tantra*† there are five Kundas at this place called

\* ॐ वटुकः क्षतिदक्षस्य मन्दोश्चेन्ननायकः ।

निर्विघ्नं कुरु देवेश पञ्चलोद्भूतप्रियः सदा ॥

वटुनाम्नो महादक्षः ईश्वरद्वारपालकः ।

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे

द्वितीयः पठस्तु ।

† ततः पूर्वपश्चादित्या वायुपर्वतसन्निधौ ।

समीपे विष्णुदेवस्य त्रिमन्दोश्च पश्चिमै ॥

*Sítákunda*, *Rámakunda*, *Lakshmanakunda*, *Brishakunda* and *Nábhikunda*. *Sítákund*, ■ related above, is no longer in existence. Small holes are, however, pointed out ■ the other Kundas. Near them, in an old temple are the images of *Ráma*, *Sítá*, and *Lakshmana*. These are stone figures, very awkwardly done, unlike the graceful idols of Calcutta.

*Jyotirmaya* consists of flickering tongues of volcanic flames in the right side of the ascent to the temple of *Sambhunath*. The flames, it is said, disappear altogether at the touch of the impious. When we visited *Jyotirmaya*, we found that it had been completely put out; and it was not till the *Mohunta* of *Sitakund*, who was acting as our *cicerone*, brought another light in contact with it, that the tongues could be lighted again. It is said that the flames move about from place to place, sometimes appearing in the temple of *Sambhunath*, sometimes in other places, and at times burn a whole forest.

पञ्चकुण्डान्वितं स्थानं परमं ब्रह्मदायकम् ।  
 दृषकुण्डं परं यस्य ग्रामं ज्योतीश्वरात्मकम् ॥  
 ततः ब्रह्मादयः सुराः सित्यं तिष्ठन्ति चानघे ।  
 पातालादुत्थिता देवी भङ्गा तत्पूर्वतः क्रमात् ॥  
 तज्जलं स्पर्शनादेवि सर्वपापान् प्रमुच्यते ।  
 तस्योत्तरदेशस्थं भाभिकुण्डं मनोहरम् ■  
 तस्योत्तरसमस्तूनाद्यं (?) रामकुण्डं मनोहरम् ।  
 लक्ष्मणस्य तथोदीच्यां सीतायाः कुण्डमुत्तमम् ॥

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणी-  
 सन्वादे चतुर्थः पटलः ।

The Mohunta told me that, on one occasion when he was coming down from the temple of Chandranath, he was overtaken and scorched by the flames which suddenly appeared in great force, on the way between him and the temple of Sambhunath. When we visited Chandrasekhara, we found that a considerable portion of the forest on both sides of our way, had been recently burnt down by the fire. Some portion or other of the range of mountains always exhibits traces of the flames. At night, we witnessed an extensive conflagration on a distant hillock. Lord Teignmouth probably referring to Jyotirmaya, when he wrote the following: "On the side of a hill distant about three miles from the burning well (Barabakunda), there is a spot of ground, of a few feet only in dimensions, from which flashes of fire burst on stamping strongly with the foot. The appearance of this spot resembled that of earth on which a fire had been kindled. I do not recollect whether it was hot to the touch."\*

The linga *Sambhunāth*, the self-created lord, is said to form part of the body of the hill. A tradition is told that one of the kings of Tipperah made great endeavours to dig it out from the shrine, in order to carry it over to his capital, but without success. He was directed, it is added, by the god to content himself with the goddess Tripurāsundari, whom he accordingly took over to his kingdom.

\* Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol II. p. 56.

In the history of Tipperah written by Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha,\* ■ certainly read of king Kumara having gone to visit ■ linga in Syámalanagar, which the historian considers to be identical with Chittagong. We also read of his grandson king Taksharao, who ■ ■ devout worshipper of Siva, but had failed to obtain ■ ■ through the influence of the god, having wounded the god in his feet. Offended at this treatment, the god is said to have left Tipperah. But it is also related that king Taksharao then propitiated the irate god with a human sacrifice, and got two sons by his influence. It is not impossible, that this statement may have connexion with the attempt to transplant the linga Sambhunáth; but ■ old officer belonging to the Chittagong Collectorate informed me, that the belief that the linga formed part of the body of the mount was groundless,—it being a movable stone having artificially imprinted on it in ■ the marks of natural lingahood†—and that the temple ■ purposely kept dark to avoid detection. Mr. Caspersz, the Assistant Magistrate, who was deputed in 1879 to superintend the *Siva Chaturdasí* mela, proposed

■ Babu Kailas Chandra Sinha's Chronicles of Tipperah, p. 5.

† नामाच्छिद्रसमायुक्तं नामावर्षसमन्वितम् ।

अदृष्टमूर्त्तं यत्किञ्च कर्मणं भुवि दृश्यते ।

तत्किञ्चन स्वयम्भूतमपरं लब्धव्यम् ॥

इति सिद्धान्तमेवम् ।

Vide p. 257 of the *Pránatoshiní*.



to the District Magistrate the opening of an aperture in the dome, to serve as a skylight which would prevent people from looking in, ■ well ■ give light and air. The well-meant suggestion could not, I believe, be carried out, ■ it ■ necessary to avoid what might have been misunderstood as uncalled for interference on the part of Government. The temple of Sambhunáth was erected down below in the plateau of the hill, ■ the ascent to that of Chandranath is not practicable throughout the year, especially in the rainy season which is somewhat long in that part of the country, owing to its being hilly. It consists of two apartments. In the outer apartment are the Bhairava, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanumat, Annapurná and others. The presiding deity is in the inner apartment, and is of course, very superior. "The sight of the face of Kramadisa (another name of Sambhunáth) saves one from future birth."\* The linga is of ■ cylindrical form, about four inches in diameter, and rising about five inches from a cone, the base of which has been walled around.

In the court-yard of the main temple of Sambhunáth are many minor shrines crumbling to decay. There is a temple of *Káli*, the dread consort of

■ कामदीशमुखं दृष्ट्वा पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ।

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे

चन्द्रशेखरवर्चनं नाम षष्ठः पटलः ।

Siva; a mandir of *Jagannáth*, and *Rádhá Krishna*; and mount *Govardhana* ■ well known in *Brindávana*. Close by are the eight *Bhairavas*, and the burial places of some of the *Mohuntas* of *Sitakund*. On the left, after passing *Sambhunáth*, is ■ sacred spring with *pucca* sides called *Gyákunda*,—which is considered equal in merit to the famous shrine at *Gaya*,—where the pilgrim shaves and bathes, and offers oblations to the manes of his ancestors. Proceeding upwards, the path becomes a mere track, with no attempt at being ■ regular road such as leads up to *Sambhunáth*. We now come to the base of mount *Chandrasekhara*. The grand staircase—consisting of about 575 steps, and generally supposed to have been built by one of the kings of *Tipperah*,—which brings the pilgrim to the temple of *Chandranáth* at the top of the *Chandrasekhara* hill, is giving way a little here and there; and unless repaired in time, will render the ascent more difficult in future than in the days before their construction. *Chandrasekhara\** is the highest peak in *Chittagong*, being 1155 feet in height, and is situate in the centre of the *Sitakund* range which, commencing from the

■ *Chandranáth* is the name of the god. The peak is called *Chandrasekhara*. It is also sometimes called *Chandranáth*. Dr. Hunter also calls it *Chandinath*. Although *Chandinath* is another name of *Siva*, I have never heard the hill called by that name. It is, however, usual to ■ *Chandranath* and *Sitakund* as synonymous terms.

northern end of the Sudder station of the district, runs without interruption to Tipperah, parallel to the Grand Trunk Road. In the *Nirvāna-tantra*\* it is mentioned ■ one of the *Kulaparvatas* or principal mountains of India. Wilson in his Dictionary erroneously places it in Arracan. "In the hill of Sitakund there is ■ stone of two descriptions, one apparently of volcanic formation, and porous, the other solid containing iron." The hill is "formed of ■ stratum inclined at an angle of 30° north-east and south-west, of hard clay in places; and in others of sandstone. The surface is generally covered with loam, but on the southern slopes of all the outskirting hills, it is red sandstone or sand.†" The original temple on this peak, built by a king of Tipperah, fell down in the cyclone of 1848, when the present structure, which is of smaller dimensions, was erected by Ram Sundar Sen, a rich merchant, who has since fallen from his high estate. The temple has little pretensions to artistic beauty. But the view around the peak was exceedingly beautiful. A ship that was sailing far off in the Bay of Bengal, appeared like ■ bird slowly flying on the horizon. The

\* नीलाचलं मन्दरश्च पर्वतं चन्द्रशेखरम् ।

हिमालयं सुवेलश्च मलयं भस्मपर्वतम् ।

चतुष्कोणे वसेदेषि एतत् सप्तकुलाचलम् ॥

इति निर्व्याणतन्त्रे सर्वतन्त्रोत्तमोत्तमे हरमौरी-

संवादे योगविवरणं नाम चतुर्थः ■ ।

† Statistics of the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1868-69, p. 25.

ascent of the hill itself, it is said, gives salvation.\* The god, however, is an ordinary linga. Sitakund was, as stated before, visited by Sir Joseph Hooker. The following is an extract from the account given by him in page 352 of Vol. II of his Himalayan Journals: "The road to the top of Seetakund leads along ■ most beautiful valley, and then winds up a cliff that is in many places almost precipitous, the ascent being partly by steps cut in the rock of which there are 560 (?). The mountain is very sacred, and there is a large Brahmin temple on its flank; and near the base a perpetual flame bursts out of the rock. This we were anxious to examine, and were extremely disappointed to find it a small vertical hole in a slaty rock, with a lateral one below for a draught, and that it is daily supplied by pious pilgrims and Brahmins with such enormous quantities of ghee (liquid butter), that it is to all intents and purposes an artificial lamp; no trace of natural phenomena being discoverable." I do not know to what flame Dr. Hooker thus alludes. Jyotirmaya is at the foot of the hill, and is also visited by pious pilgrims. But there can be no doubt that it is a natural phenomenon.

In order to visit *Virupáksha*, ■ phallic symbol of

■ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरारोहे मुक्तिमाप्नोति मानवः ॥

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे

चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम षष्ठः पटलः ।

Siva (similar to Chandranath and Sambhunath, mentioned above), in a temple situated midway down the descent from Chandrasekhara, the pilgrim descends by a north-east route. Many proceed to Chandranath after visiting Virupáksha. The ascent to this temple from the foot of the mountain is not a pleasant affair. Sometimes you have to take a long leap, holding in your hand the frail root of an old tree. If it gives way, you are at once precipitated into the abyss below, which seems unfathomable. On his way to Chandranath from Virupaksha, the pilgrim visits *Unakoti Sivalinga* in a picturesque spot called *Pátála Puri*, or the nether world, covered with green foliage, and full of the beauties of nature. The undulations in the rocky surface of the cave, drenched with water issuing from the sides of it, are pointed out as Unakotí or 99 lacs of Sivas. What Mr. Sherring said of its prototype in Benares applies to this: "The actual number cut out on the superficies of the stone is not more than a few hundred; but the Hindoos are not particular in their definition of numbers."\* Descending from Virupáksha, we meet the former road again at the *Mandákiní*. This stream is considered to be identical with the river in heaven of the same name. It is said that the Ganges on starting from the Himálaya divided itself into three streams, one running through heaven called Mandákiní, another

\* Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindoos, p. 100.



flowing on earth called Gangá, and the third Bhogavati, which is in the nether world. The water of the stream is certainly very clear, cool, and sweet.

Of the other shrines, *Bárabakunda* is a volcanic well. It is about three miles' journey southwards from the Sitakund village, and is situated in the same range of hills. *Bábara* fire, according to ancient mythology,\* originated from the anger of the Muni *Aurva*, whose mother's womb was about to be ripped open by the Kshatriyas. It was deposited in the bed of the sea, to prevent it from burning the three worlds. It is stated in the *Varahi Tantra*† that *Baraba* is the veritable fire which sprang from the third eye of Siva and destroyed *Káma*, and that it is to burn down the three worlds at the final annihilation. The same Tantra also relates that the spring is four cubits square, with tepid water, and that the

\* ततस्तं क्रोधसञ्जातं यौर्गोऽग्निं वरुणाकृत्ये ।

उत्सर्ज्य स चैवाप उपयुक्ते महोदधौ ॥ ११ ॥

महद्यग्निरा भूत्वा यतद्देविदेव विदुः ।

तमग्निमुद्गिरद्वक्तात् पितृत्यापो महोदधौ ॥ १२ ॥

इति श्रीमहाभारते आदिपर्वणि चैत्ररथपर्वण्यौ-

र्व्योपाख्यानेऽशीत्यधिकशततमोऽध्यायः ।

हयगिरः = बहुवामुष्मम् । इति भारतभाष्यद्वीपाख्यभारतटीकायां मौलिकः ।

† योगनेत्राक्षसञ्जातो जलमध्ये च दुर्वहः ।

कामो भस्म संनीतो येन नेत्राग्निना पुरा ॥

चिलोकं दह्यते येन समुद्रश्चैव शुष्यते ।

यमानो दह्यते तेन ब्रह्माण्डं सचराचरम् ॥

वाराणस्याम् सप्तमः पङ्क्तः ।

fire consists of seven flames.\* The following count of the spring is given by Lord Teignmouth:† “The burning well is situated about twenty-two miles from Chatigan, at the termination of a valley surrounded by hills. I visited it in 1778, and, from recollection, am enabled to give the following account of it:—the shape of the well, or rather reservoir, is oblong, about six feet by four, and the depth does not exceed twelve feet. The water, which is always cold, is supplied by a spring, and there is a conduit for carrying off the superfluity; a part of the surface of the well, about a fourth, is covered with brick-work, which is nearly ignited by the flames, which flash without intermission from the surface of the water. It would appear that an inflammable vapour escapes through the water, which takes fire on contact with the external air; the perpetuity of the flame is occasioned by the ignited brick-work as, without this, much of the vapour would escape without conflagration. This was proved by taking away the covering of brick-work after the extinction of the heat, by throwing upon it the water of

■ ■■■ दक्षिणतो देवि कुण्डं वाङ्मयसंज्ञकम् ।  
 क्रोशान्ते विद्यते कुण्डं चतुर्दशं सुशोभनम् ॥  
 सप्तजिह्वाको वज्रिः मुक्तिकेशरसन्निधौ ।  
 मण्डलमीषदुष्पद सजाग्रिः शिवरूपिणः (?) ॥

वाराह्याम् ■■■ पदसः ।

† Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, p. 55.

the well. The flames still continued to burst forth from the surface, but with momentary intermissions and the vapour was always immediately kindled by holding a candle at a small distance from the surface of the water. A piece of silver placed in the conduit for carrying off the superfluous water, was discoloured in a few minutes, and an infusion of tea gave a dark tinge to the water."

Compare with the above, Captain Pogson's description of the spring—"In front is a building about thirty feet square, over the spring; the descent to it, by a flight of steps, is about fifteen feet; the rising heat was like that of a hot bath. Flames, in successive flashes, were playing on the surface of the water, which, from a column of perpetually rising bubbles, appeared to be boiling. The air they contained, ignited as it came in contact with an oven-like furnace, which the flames fed, and rendered, on one side red-hot. The heat of this self-ignited furnace rendered the surface of the water tepid, but it is naturally cold. In order to condense, and thereby perpetuate, the flames, about one-half of the spring is built over, with an aperture in the centre of the arch, through which, looking from the terrace above, the flames are seen playing on the water. Persons bathing, took in their hands and on their clothes the water with the flame burning on it. The uncovered part is a square of less than five feet, and the covered part about the same di-

mensions. The water is brackish, sulphureous, and chalybeate. A servant drank ■ much of it as he could hold in both hands united, twice filled, and ■ so severely purged, that he remained behind, and laid down until its effects went off ..... The water of the Balwa koond has an exhilarating effect, occasions ■ slight headache, and a sensation of fulness, which soon go off. Its effects ■■ diuretic, slightly aperient, and creative of hunger.”\*

The well outside the Kunda, formed by water issuing from the spring, is called *Básikunda*. Here the devotee first bathes and purifies himself. He then bathes in the *Bárabakunda* itself inside, and offers *bel* leaves and flowers to the flames to appease the burning god. It is said that at each offer of the *bel* leaves and flowers, the god roars louder to express his satisfaction. Close by are *Dadhibhairava*; the temple of *Jvalakáli*; and the spring of *Kumári*.

At ■ nearly similar distance and similarly situated is *Lavanákhyā*, the Nuolukka of Captain Pogson and the Naldala Khyā of Statistical Report of 1868-9, which differs from Barabakunda in the weakness of its flame and in the increased saltiness of its water. The salt-water is used for cooking purposes, though it is said that the salt cannot be eliminated from the water. A tradition prevails that this was tested

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during ■ Tour to Chateegaon, p. 203.



by Mr. Harvey\* when he was Collector of Chittagong, and that he accordingly discharged some persons arrested for illicit manufacture of salt. The water, it is said, cures goitre. Around Lavanákhyā are the following: *Dadhikunda*, a small well fed by the stream issuing from Lavanákhyā; *Gurudhvani*, another Jyotirmaya; *Brahma Kunda*, a hot spring on the top of a small hill, east of Lavanákhyā; *Suryakunda*, a phenomenon similar to Lavanákhyā and *Bárabakunda*.† Near Lavanákhyā a place is shown as where the right arm of Sati, the consort of Siva, fell, cut by the discus of Vishnu. But no idol is seen there, and it is not held in the same veneration as Kálighat, Kámákhyā, and similar places.

Dr. Oldham thus epitomizes Captain Pogson: "There are seven other springs within a circle of

\* Mr. John Inglis Harvey was Collector of Chittagong from 1831 to 1837, with short intermissions, during which he acted as Commissioner of the Division. *Vide* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pp. 118-121.

† There are Mohuntas at the temple of Sambhunath, Bárabakunda, and Lavanákhyā. Of these, the Mohunta of Sambhunath is the richest and the most well-known. He is generally called the Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta of Sitakund, whose name is Kis, or Bān, is a young gentleman of excellent manners, and of good education. He is also the Mohunta of Adinath, in the island of Moiscal. Of this god the same story is told as of that at Vaidyanath, near Deoghur. The Mohuntas have to take a vow of celibacy, and are succeeded by their principal disciples.



six miles, called Nuolukka (Lavanákhyā), Kooaree (Kumári Kund), Dadhee (Dadhi), Burma (Brahma), Suruj (Súrya), Chandur (Chandra), and Seeta (Sita). Nuolukka is warm, vapour ignites on the application of flame, saline; Kooaree is hot, saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate; vapour ignites. Dadhee, water is cold, salt. Burma (Brahma?) very hot and saltish, slightly chalybeate, vapour ignites. Chandur or Chander is on a hill, salt and exceedingly hot ('said to have appeared within the last four months') ignites; Seeta is pure and limpid.\*

From Lavanákhyā the pilgrim proceeds to *Sahasradhára*, a cataract. The water falls beautifully in thin streams, so as to form a natural shower-bath, from a height of about 400 feet. This is by far the most picturesque and romantic of all the various and wonderful sights of Sitakund. It is customary for pilgrims to stand under it. The water of *Sahasradhára* is considered to be Siva himself. One cannot forget the bath at *Sahasradhára*. It is said, that on the words "bom bom," which are peculiar to Siva, being pronounced, the water falls with gradually increasing force.

The places noted before are those generally visited by pilgrims. There are many others, for the *locale* of which the curious and the religious will refer to the *Váráhi Tantra*, the Bradshaw of the shrines of

\* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Part II, p. 59.

Sitakund. From what has been said above, the reader who has had patience to follow us to the end of this book, will, it is trusted, be convinced of the recent character of these shrines. There is a sustained effort to plant on this place all the *tirthas* which are held in esteem by the Hindoos. For the most famous shrines of Benares, of Gaya, of Brindavan, of Puri, and other places, miniature *tirthas* are pointed out in Sitakund.\* The remarkable phenomena which nature presents in the place, have aided the fabrication of superstitious interpolations and forgeries. The sacred writings, which have been quoted before, bear evident indications of the alternate supremacy of the Sivaites and the Vishnuvites, and of the gradual multiplication of the shrines esteemed by each sect. But the belief in their sacredness is firm, deep-rooted, and universal. A man who holds a different opinion, is looked upon as irreligious and sacrilegious, even in Chittagong, where Hindooism is at a discount. Whether on account of their recent establishment, or from any other cause, the shrines have not received attention at the hands of the antiquarian and the scien-

\* There seems to be no end of places called Sitakund. In p. 23 *ante* and footnote, it has already been stated that there are three more Sitakunds, besides the Sitakund in Chittagong, viz., those at Monghyr, Kelat, and Ceylon. In pages 22 and 35 of Vol. XVI of Cunningham's *Archæological Report*, there is mention of another Sitakund situate on the River Gandak in Tirhut.

tist. In these pages they have been described by a layman. But the antiquarian and the scientist will be able to ascertain the time when these shrines were first established, and how they gradually expanded. They will be able to ascertain the effect of the waters of the several springs, and analyze the medicinal virtues, which they are believed to possess. They will be able to ascertain the extent of the Hindoo occupation of the district, and of its conquest by the king of Tipperah. They will, in short, be able to complete the ancient history of Chittagong, which is now so meagre and unsatisfactory.

